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EDITORIAL

THERE is a tendency noticeable in some promoters of the Liturgical Movement to decry the use of 'devotions', and in doing so to seem to imply that the only wholly legitimate kind of prayer is the official liturgical prayer of the Mystical Body, the prayer of the faithful participating in Mass and Divine Office. There is certainly truth in one of the premises from which this attitude derives, in that every prayer, no matter what its occasion or content, is offered to the Eternal Father through the Son and by the power of the Holy Spirit, and therefore through the Mass; not necessarily in this or that Mass, but in the life of Christ in his Mystical Body which is centred and has its focus in the Mass. It is entirely true therefore to say, and we should try to think in this way, that our morning prayers, our quick ejaculations shot out during the day in face of temptation or other crisis, or turned over in the mind to sanctify the ordinary routine of daily work, our visit to the Blessed Sacrament and our evening rosary, all speed home to him to whom they are directed in and through the redeeming power of Christ, and so in and through the Mass. And since the Divine Office leads up to and prepares for the celebration of Mass, and is indeed one and the same prayer with it, as the liturgical construction of the *Opus Dei* in religious communities amply illustrates, all prayer of whatever kind is fulfilled and completed in this official prayer of the Church, the prayer which Christ himself prays in his Mystical Body.

The error of this tendency to decry the use of 'devotions' lies in failure to relate them, and their place in the life of the Church, with the central core of the Church's prayer. This failure results in 'devotions' being treated as a kind of distraction from and diminution of the power and effectiveness of that prayer. Two causes, which are however closely related, contribute to this misapprehension. It may arise from over-emphasis on the excellence and necessity of corporate prayer, an over-emphasis which leads to the error that prayer apart from the assembly of the faithful is hardly true prayer at all. A devout member of the Student Christian Movement was on a walking tour in Greece. One night

he was entertained as a guest in a Greek monastery, and on the following morning, when setting out on the next stage of his journey, he found himself accompanied by a Greek monk who was travelling to another monastery. That evening they put up at a public hostelry and shared a room. The good protestant, before getting into bed, went down on his knees and said his prayers, the monk went to bed without saying any prayers at all. The same procedure was followed the next night at the next inn. Overcome by astonishment and perplexity the student at last ventured to ask the monk for an explanation. 'How can I pray apart from my brethren in the monastery?' was the answer he got. A genuine, if rather extreme, expression of the eastern Christian's deep sense of solidarity in Christ's Mystical Body, and a salutary corrective of the westerner's inveterate tendency to individualism.

For the failure to see the true place of 'devotions' in the Christian life arises also from a fear that this individualism will show itself in a tendency to substitute a purely private kind of prayer, envisaging purely private interests, for the common prayer of the Church, offered through the official act of the Church, an act whose meaning is best realised by the communal use of the Church's own words, which express the worship of the Mystical Body as a whole. It is this that lies behind the recurrent controversy in our Catholic papers concerning the use of the rosary at Mass, or its substitution for the traditional and liturgical Vespers or Compline as the Sunday evening service.

As the preservation of the integrity of human society depends upon a just balance being struck between community and the individual persons who constitute it, so in the worship of God, and for the same reasons, a similar balance must be kept between 'devotions' of a quasi-personal and private character and the common worship of the People of God which is wholly public and wholly a community act. The two elements are necessary to each other and complementary; each gives something vital to the other because the spiritual life of the community depends for its vitality and energy, as a body, upon the extent of the contribution each member of the community continuously makes to it, and in its turn the community, so vitalized, gives back its contribution to each of the members who constitute it.

The primary purpose of 'devotions' is the deepening of personal faith by spiritual penetration into the mysteries of redemption by

the operation of the gifts of the Holy Ghost. Thus in using the rosary the vocal prayers are only of relative importance; it is the mysteries of our Lord's life as seen through our Lady's eyes, and the spiritual understanding of them, that is primary. For this deeper penetration will convert our faith from notional to real assent and enable us to grasp by spiritual insight the bearing of Christ's redemption upon our own lives, so that its realization becomes more and more their motive power. Or again, in making the Stations of the Cross, we are brought into personal contact with Christ in his Passion. There is in this devotion a wealth of intimate detail drawn, in the main, from Scripture and best presented in scriptural words, which enables us to enter deeply into the things which were wrought for our salvation. In both Rosary and Stations of the Cross devotion to the Sacred Heart is closely involved; for it is by the love of Christ, a human love showed us in the life of obedience he shared with us, and in the supreme obedience of his death, that love for him is generated in our own hearts.

Behind these great personal devotions that the Church sets before us for our use lies another devotion wider in its scope; that to the Scriptures, in the *lectio divina*. In the slow prayerful study of God's Word written, regularly practised, even if only for a few minutes at a time, is to be found the raw material of our prayer. This will be transmuted by grace into that abiding prayer which is a permanent attitude of adoration to be perfected one day, please God, in heaven. Our *lectio divina* will take us through the Gospels, the Acts and the Epistles, and looking back from them to the Old Testament; to the psalms and the prophecies and to God's mighty acts of deliverance recorded in the sacred history of the chosen people, in which are divinely foreshadowed those mightier acts which wrought the world's salvation and ours.

Our faith and understanding thus deepened will increase the depth and power of our contribution to the corporate and official worship of the Church which is nothing less than our sharing with Christ our Lord in his redeeming sacrifice. 'Devotions' and Liturgy are not in opposition to one another. Rightly used they are complementary in the building of a personal sanctification which is at the same time a growing realization of the full meaning of the obligations and privileges of membership in the Mystical Body.

SENTIMENT OR DEVOTION

A study of the Encyclical *Haurietis Aquas in Gaudio*

REGINALD GINNS, O.P.

AUGUST the 23rd of this year marks the centenary of the decree of the Sacred Congregation of Rites by which Pius IX instituted the feast of the Sacred Heart as a common fast for the whole Church. His successor Pius XII takes this opportunity to write his latest encyclical letter in order to explain and defend what has become such a popular devotion of the faithful during the past century. But it is a devotion which has had a much longer history than that, as the Pope is at pains to prove; indeed he here maintains that fundamentally it is an ancient and traditional devotion of the faithful, the only thing new about it being the new form it has taken on during the past three centuries owing to the influence of certain holy men and women. It is this new form which gives reason for the apologetic or defensive character of the encyclical.

In his classical work¹ on the nature and history of the devotion to the Sacred Heart, Jean Bainvel describes the repeated and unsuccessful efforts made by French ecclesiastics for a century and half before the decree of 1856 to persuade the Holy See to constitute a universal feast with special Mass and Office. Some may be surprised, if not shocked, to learn of the steady reluctance of Rome to accede to these requests. And in the light of her present attitude it does seem enigmatic at first sight. Some, we imagine, may even think it serves to confirm the opinion of those who, as the encyclical observes, profess to find an unhealthy element of naturalism and sentimentality, not to say superstition, in the more popular form of this devotion. This criticism is met and answered in the course of the letter where the Holy Father maintains that, rightly understood and used, it is theologically sound and spiritually profitable, as well as fundamentally ancient and traditional in the Church. Thus, after making reference to the visions of St Margaret Mary Alacoque about the end of the seventeenth century and to the part she played in the spread of the devotion under its new form, he proceeds to say:

'It ought not to be asserted that this devotion owes its origin
La devotion au Sacré Coeur de Jesus. Paris 1906). See also his article in the Catholic Encyclopedia.

to a divine revelation made to a private person, or that it sprang up suddenly in the Church. On the contrary it should rather be said that it is a thing that flourishes spontaneously from the lively faith and fervent piety which chosen souls entertain towards their adorable Saviour and his glorious wounds, which bear such eloquent testimony to his immense love for us.'

And perhaps this was the mind of the Holy See in refusing the repeated requests mentioned above. It is true that St Margaret Mary received some sceptical treatment at the hands of her community who laughed at her as a visionary, and it was not until 1864 that she was raised to the altars of the Church by beatification. But unless we are to assume that Rome shared the doubts of her sisters in Religion we may very well conjecture that the refusal to institute a universal feast meant no more than that the devotion was sufficiently catered for in the feasts of our Lord already to be found in the calendar. Thus in 1697, a few years after the death of the saint, her sisters of the Visitation received the privilege of keeping a special feast of the Sacred Heart, but the Mass to be used was the old Mass of the Five Sacred Wounds which already commemorated the loving and suffering heart of Christ. As is well known, the devotion to the Five Wounds is of ancient origin and was widespread in pre-Reformation England.

But already thirty years before 1697 a special feast of the Sacred Heart was being celebrated in certain parts of France, if not with the permission of the Holy See at least with the approval of some of the bishops. No doubt this is traceable to the influence of St John Eudes (1601-1680) who was responsible for the liturgical office used at the feast. The spread of the devotion led to further pressure being brought to bear on the Holy See for its universal extension, and in 1765, the Queen of France adding her prayer to that of the ecclesiastics, Clement XIII was persuaded to grant the privilege of celebrating the feast throughout France. For the understanding of these events it is not without significance that this was the period of the great struggle with the Jansenists and those French encyclopedic philosophers whose rationalism was fast corrupting the upper classes in other countries as well as France. They openly professed their determination to destroy the Church to which they contemptuously referred as *l'Infâme*. Only four years before, in 1761, Voltaire had written to one of his friends: 'When we have got rid of the Jesuits we shall have ea-

work with *l'Infâme*'. And it was only eight years later, in 1773, that Clement XIV signed the brief by which the Holy See itself decreed the suppression of the Society of Jesus. No doubt this was a move which Rome considered to be in the best interests of the peace of the Church, but to many of the faithful it must have seemed that the forces of evil were triumphant. It was a time, therefore, when there was very good reason for propagating a devotion which laid special emphasis on the need for divine mercy and reparation for sin; and it was owing to persevering appeals, particularly from France, that the Holy See finally granted the decree of 1856. The whole course of this history furnishes an instructive example of the proverbially slow prudence of Rome, as well as of the persevering determination of the faithful.

The past century has witnessed remarkable developments in the progress of the devotion. Pius IX instituted the feast for universal observance under the simple rite of a common major double (*totum duplex* in the Dominican calendar). In the meantime there grew up and increased the practice of consecrating homes, communities and nations to the Sacred Heart, a custom which the Holy See silently observed without comment until 1899 when Leo XIII prescribed a general consecration of the whole world, at the same time raising the feast to the rank of a double of the first class. A quarter of a century later Pius XI, by his encyclical *Miserentissimus Redemptor* of 8 May 1928, put the final touches to the feast by adding a most solemn privileged octave, thus raising it to the highest festival rank. Some years later our Dominican liturgy lost its old and much regretted office of the Sacred Heart with the splendid hymns *Quicumque certum quaeritis* and *Summi Parentis Filio*, along with those very apt and beautiful extracts from St Bernard in the second and third nocturns. The encyclical *Haurietis aquas in gaudio* of Pius XII, issued 15 May 1956, marks the latest stage in the progress of the devotion.

With apostolic prudence the Holy Father, as though reminding us that true devotion consists in 'zeal according to knowledge', bids us halt to consider what is the real significance and value of the worship the Church pays to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. He turns his attention first to those Catholics who set little or no value on this devotion, some not considering that it is in any way necessary for true piety, others going so far as to find in it traces

of naturalism and superstition. He regrets to see that it meets with little esteem even among certain sections of the faithful who in other respects show themselves zealous in the cause of religion and sanctity. They maintain that this devotion, in its modern form at least, is little adapted to the urgent needs of our time; nay, that it is rather a hindrance than a help, suitable perhaps for such of the pious female sex as allow their lives to be ruled by emotion and sentiment, but unworthy of people of culture and intelligence. For what the world now needs above all, soaked as it is in atheistic materialism and gross secularism, the cult of the body and the neglect of the spirit, is a devotion that appeals to the reason rather than to the feelings. We may agree with them, and the Holy Father would be the first to do so, that most of what we encounter in the pagan state of the modern world consists in a gross appeal to the emotions, and not the highest emotions by any means. But what is to be said of the conclusions these critics draw from popular devotion to the Sacred Heart?

As is usual in papal documents of this kind, no names are named and no indication is given of the quarters in which these opinions have been ventilated. But doubtless many of us have heard or read things like this; some of us perhaps have said similar things (though not so immoderately, I hope) in attacking the prevalent sentimentality of our times in which emotion seems to be taking the place of reason in art and letters and ethics, as well as in the religious sphere. Observant readers of the modern press cannot fail to notice how regularly 'we feel' is used instead of 'we think'. The modern man *feels* that certain things are true, or right, or necessary. He *feels* certain of this or that, though certitude, if it is certitude, is an act of the intelligence firmly adhering to a thing as true, based not on the feelings but on objective evidence or else reliable authority. The feeling of certainty is no guarantee that you are right; as Father Vincent McNabb used to say to his students, you can be quite certain and quite wrong. As for the question of ethics and emotionalism, we all remember the famous mother-and-child controversy, the recurring debates about euthanasia and mercy-killing; and at the present time we have the long-drawn-out discussion about the rights and wrongs of capital punishment. The arguments used have furnished us with proofs of the modern flight from reason. And in the matter of religious controversy we have seen it set

down in black and white by an opponent who desired to be thought serious that the Catholic system cannot be right; it is too logical, and religion is not logic but life. What he really meant by this utterance was that religion is not a matter for the mind but for the feelings; what we feel to be right and true, that is the proper rule of faith; it is not *fides*, an act of the mind governed by the will that is required, but *fiducia*, a confidence proceeding from an unexplainable feeling inside.

This may be all very true but it does not touch the subject under discussion unless we think that Catholics are as materially minded as the rest of the world. We have to face the fact that we are all the children of our age, and it would be a lack of sincerity to persuade ourselves that we manage to live in the world without being of the world. It is no longer as it was in the last century and before, when Catholics were clearly marked off from the rest of the people of this country as a peculiar people. And in the religious sphere for better or worse there is certainly a well-marked change today from the sturdy and unemotional piety common among our forefathers. You have only to compare modern manuals of devotion with those formerly in common use (Challoner's meditations and prayers provide a good example) in order to appreciate the difference. It might be summed up by saying that we are more concerned with *devotions*, they with *devotion*, understanding the latter word in the sense defined by ascetic theologians like St Thomas and St Francis of Sales. For them it meant that primary and most important act of the virtue of *religion*, a virtue that resides in the will and not in the feelings: that act which essentially consists in the will's determination to stick at all costs to the things that belong to the service of God. And unless our ancestors had firmly persevered in that sort of devotion the Church would hardly exist in this country today. That national characteristic of a certain stoicism which forbade the public exhibition of emotion they extended to the sphere of religion; they professed to feel a repugnance for what they called the sentimental and showy piety of some of their continental brethren. This, they thought, was one reason for the religious indifference and anticlericalism of the men-folk in foreign lands where so many considered religion to be fit only for women and children.

Now we need hardly say that the Holy Father is certainly no

advocate of maudlin and sentimental piety in this encyclical on true devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. But at the same time there is a just mean to be observed in this question of the place of the emotions in religious observance. We are not stoics or, thank God, the cold and cultured intellectuals some of the critics seem to have in mind. Neither stoics nor cultured intellectuals are pure spirits; they have a body and a sensitive appetite both of which have their due part to play in the work of religion, for true religion means the dedication of the whole man to the service of God, soul and body with all their diverse powers under the direction of right reason and good will. One of the old arguments for the truth of the Christian religion was that it fulfilled all the legitimate aspirations of human nature. The Christian can say with the pagan Terence, *humanus sum et nihil humani a me alienum puto*, for we are not Manichees who think that everything proceeding from a material principle is necessarily evil. Nor are we to imitate the Puritans who, in their zeal for religion pure and undefiled, stripped our churches of all the beauty that appealed to the senses. Those movements of our sensitive appetite which we call the emotions (passions is the philosophical word) are not in themselves bad. They share in moral goodness when harnessed by right reason and good will; they are morally bad and harmful when so uncontrolled that they lead reason and will like captives chained to the chariots of their conqueror. And therefore that which makes a moderate appeal to our emotions is according to reason and can be very effective in stirring up the will to the exercise of devotion in its strict theological sense; whereas the immoderate playing on the feelings tends to produce a morbid state in which one lives in the emotions as do animals, for the emotions belong to the animal side of human nature.

We may suppose then that the objections raised to the popular devotion to the Sacred Heart are based on some such supposition as this. In dealing with these objections let us admit, what the Pope himself admits, that this devotion (if we are to judge from the use of words) is directed primarily to the physical organ called the heart which beat in the breast of Christ. I say 'judging from the words used' because I am persuaded that when people speak of praying to the Sacred Heart they are unconsciously using that figure of speech the grammarians call *synecdoche*, using the part for the whole. In other words they mean the person of Jesus Christ in

his incarnation, and it is doubtful if in their prayer they even advert to the physical heart of his sacred body. But all the same there is no objection, as the encyclical points out, against making the heart itself an object of our devotion and worship. The whole of Christ's human nature, of which his heart was a material part, was assumed by his divinity as an instrument for the accomplishment of our salvation. The heart played a part, and a very important part, in that work, and like every other member or element of his human nature was personally (which is the meaning of hypostatically) united to the divinity. Consequently the heart, like the hand or the foot of Christ, merits that kind of worship which is paid to God alone called *latria*. It was the heart of a person who is divine, so that what that heart experienced God himself experienced.

But, let us repeat, the heart of Christ was a material organ made of flesh and muscle like the heart of any man, or of any animal for that matter. In his breast it served the purpose for which that organ is intended; it was a muscular pump which by the opening and closing of its valves sent the blood coursing through his veins. About once every minute during his life, from his conception in the womb of our Lady to his death on the cross, his sacred blood circulated round his body in order to vitalize it and enable it to perform the work for which he had assumed it. A hundred million times during the thirty-odd years of his life that heart beat steadily without any apparent rest to accomplish this purpose which was of so great importance for us; a wonderful example of constant devotion and love.

But although we may without any sentimentality or abuse of language speak of every beat of the Sacred Heart as an act of love for us, we do not therefore intend it to be understood that the material heart was capable of eliciting or producing from itself that vital action which we call love, not even human love much less divine and uncreated love. The heart was not made for that, but for the purpose we have described above. In other words we do not love with our hearts but with those powers or faculties which are made to produce or elicit the act of loving. But before turning to the consideration of those powers of human nature let us hasten to add that every heart-beat of Christ, like every breath of his mouth and every step of his foot, can properly be called in the language of theology an act of love commanded by

the will, for every operation of his human nature was governed by his will for our salvation, and the motive of that will was his love for us.

What has just been said may seem to be at variance not only with the expressions we use in our prayer, even liturgical prayer, addressed to the Sacred Heart, but also with the common language of mankind which attributes love to the heart. Do we not say that we love with all our hearts, or that we can find no love in our hearts? We speak of some as heartless because they do not love, of others as heart-broken with disappointed love, and there are innumerable other expressions of a like nature.¹ But a little consideration will show that these are picturesque figures of speech, symbolical or metaphorical, and if they are so common, that arises from a simple fact of which every man is aware. The movements of the material heart are most intimately connected not only with our physical life but also with our psychological and moral life. The heart, more than any other member of the material part of our nature, experiences most quickly and keenly the effects of those movements of the sensitive appetite which we call emotions or passions; love and hatred, desire and repugnance, joy and sadness, courage and fear, hope and despair, and finally, anger. This is what leads us to speak and write as we do, either using the heart as a symbol and sign of love, or speaking metaphorically of the heart as if it were the organ of loving; or, as we said above, taking the part for the whole and considering the heart as the whole person. The encyclical makes frequent reference to the symbolical aspect of the devotion to the Sacred Heart. The Holy Father quotes the words of his predecessor Leo XIII:

‘In the Sacred Heart of Jesus there is a symbol and clear image of the infinite love of Jesus Christ, a love which moves us to love one another’.

He adds words of his own to the same effect:

‘There is no reason forbidding us to pay worship to the most Sacred Heart of Jesus in so far as it shares in, and is the most

¹ This usage is not universal. The Semites, and the Bible bears witness to this, considered the heart of man to be the seat not of the affections but of the intelligence. ‘Son, give me thy heart’ means ‘Listen to me, my son’. Out of the heart, says Our Lord, proceed evil thoughts. When St Paul tells his beloved Philippians that he has them in his heart he is assuring them of his continual remembrance of them. He tells the Corinthians that they are his epistle, ‘written not on tablets of stone but on the fleshly tablets of (my) heart’. ‘Man shall come to a deep heart’ refers to meeting with snares laid by a crafty mind, as Psalm 63 makes abundantly clear. The ‘clean of heart’ are the pure-minded

natural and most fitting symbol of, that unfathomable love of our divine Redeemer which he still shows towards mankind. For although his heart is no longer subject to the vicissitudes of this mortal life, it still continues to live and to beat inseparably united as it is to the person of the Word of God, in whom and through whom it is joined to the divine will.' The words which follow provide an example of the metaphorical usage of the heart:

'On this account, since the heart of Christ overflows with a love that is both divine and human, since it is full of all the treasures of grace our Saviour has won for us by his life, passion, and death, that heart is the eternal source of the love which the Holy Ghost infuses into every member of Christ's Mystical Body.'

We must interpret his words in the same metaphorical sense when he describes the Sacred Heart as 'the most noble part of the human nature of Christ'; for if we use words in their precise meaning we have to say that the heart, being a material part of human nature, is inferior to Christ's human intelligence and will, in so far as these are faculties of the spiritual part of his human nature.

But the simple Catholic is not to be disturbed in his mind or distracted in his devotion by these apparent subtleties. His attitude towards the Sacred Heart of Jesus as the object of his love and worship is that summed up by the Holy Father in such words as these:

'The Heart of our Saviour is in some sort an image of the person of the Divine Word and of his twofold nature, human and divine. In that heart we are able to contemplate not only the symbol but the summing up of the mystery of our redemption. Therefore when we adore the most Sacred Heart of Jesus we adore in it and through it both the uncreated love of the Word of God and his human love also, along with all human feelings and virtues. For both the human and the divine love of Christ have moved our Saviour to offer himself as a sacrifice for our sake and for the Church which is his spouse.'

Following the teaching of the encyclical let us consider the sources from which our Lord elicited the different kinds of his love for mankind. The Holy Father assigns to this love a threefold character to which he concludes from the consideration of the reality of the Incarnation. The Word of God, he says, did not

assume an intangible and artificial human nature, as the heretical Docetists of the first century maintained. He really and truly united to his divine person an individual, complete and perfect human nature when he was conceived in the womb of the Virgin Mary by the operation of the Holy Ghost. Therefore his human nature lacked nothing that is required for the integrity and completeness of human nature in general. As we say in the catechism, Jesus Christ was perfect God and perfect man, and perfect here means complete. Being truly God he therefore elicited from his divine will such an infinite act of love as was totally and immeasurably above all the powers of his human nature, for that human nature was a created nature and consequently could be the source of acts that were finite only. But he was truly man because the Son of God assumed into personal union with his Godhead all that goes to make up an integral human nature, spiritual soul and material body with all their different faculties and powers; intellect and will, internal senses like the imagination, external senses of sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch, and finally a sensitive inclination or appetite with all its powers of passion or emotion. Such is the dogmatic teaching of the infallible Church, a doctrine of which examples are to be found throughout the Gospels. Needless to say Christ's human nature was not only integrally perfect but also morally perfect, because there reigned in it perfect harmony and order, every lower power being completely subordinate and obedient to the superior powers of intellect and will, and these in their turn were obedient instruments of his divinity.

From all this follows the important consequence that the Son of God during his mortal life was subject to the whole course of human experience, save only for disease and sin which, however, do not belong to the perfection of human nature. Thus he, the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, was born and he died, he ate and drank, he shed tears, suffered pain and distress, he felt the movements of his sensitive appetite which we call the passions of joy and pity, fear and anger, and finally he experienced those feelings that are stirred up in the heart by strong affection. By figure of speech, as we have noted above, to these sentiments of the heart are given the name of love, though psychologically speaking they are the results of the passion of love which is elicited from the sensitive appetite, belonging to the lower and

irrational part of human nature. Much more noble and much more important, therefore, is that act of love which was elicited by the human will of Christ, a benevolent love which 'seeketh not its own' but is altogether concerned with the good of the object loved, a love that is totally spiritual in character because it flows from and resides in a faculty that is totally spiritual.

Thus we may speak of the threefold love of Christ, the love of his heart, the love of his human will, and the love of his divine will. Each is admirable and a fitting object of worship. But it is clear that devotion to the Sacred Heart should by no means find its ultimate object in the sentiments of the material heart of our Lord. Nor indeed should it stop at that which is much higher in nobility, namely the created and finite act of love which flows from his human will. We must never forget that the human nature of Christ in its entirety is but the created instrument of his divinity; that the purpose of the Incarnation is to show the immensity of the love of the divine will and to furnish a bridge by which man may attain to union with God. *Deus factus est homo ut homo fieret Deus*, says St Augustine. Thus it would be an error to concentrate too exclusively on the physical and material aspect of the Incarnation or even of the Passion of Christ, no matter how effective this may be in stirring up an emotional or sensible devotion. As Albert the Great warns us, 'through the bleeding wounds of the humanity we should enter into the secrets of the divinity'. If preachers of devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, therefore, refrain from concentration on emotional appeal and present the faithful with such a theological exposition as the encyclical contains, there will be little danger of the exaggerated sentimentality and superstition which some have feared. Nor, as the Holy Father warns, is the devotion to be used as a consoling and comfortable exercise, promising great rewards to those who are faithful. Let us be firmly persuaded, he says, that devotion to the most Sacred Heart of Jesus does not consist principally in sentimental piety. Nor should its chief purpose be to obtain certain promised benefits of which we learn not from the teaching of the faith but from private revelation. What, he continues, was really desired by our Lord in these revelations was that we carry out with greater fervour those principal obligations of religion which consist in acts of the will, love and expiation for sin, and thereby more readily gain true spiritual benefits.

THE DIVISIONS OF THE WAY OF THE CROSS

BERNARD KELLY

A NATURAL division of the fourteen stations of the cross lies simply in this: that according to the arrangement usually adopted in churches the first seven stations are a journey out from the sanctuary, the last seven a journey back. The division lies between the second fall and the meeting with the women of Jerusalem; and it is natural that it should fall there for this reason too, that in the touching sequence of stations four to six Christ has given us, through Mary in the first place and then through Simon and Veronica, all that pertains to our own cross-bearing in this life: the share of his burden and the likeness to himself bearing it. After that, immediately, he falls for the second time as if emptied of strength by his gift. The seventh station has the nature of a conclusion, but what is concluded is only the first half of the way: its outward journey. There follows the meeting with the women of Jerusalem and then, immediately again, the most grievous fall of all, prelude to the work on the Holy Hill.

The three falls punctuate the Way in a manner perfectly intelligible and significant, and before it can become quite evident to us that the eighth station commences a return in a very much deeper sense than a physical turning back to the sanctuary, we must consider how the Way is divided by the falls themselves.

They resolve the remaining stations into four groups of two, three, one and five. The two stations of the first group present us firstly with the figure of Christ in his condemnation, secondly with the Cross and Christ's acceptance of it. They appear in a sense static, preliminary to the movement of wayfaring which characterizes the second group of three. The single station of the third group is also in movement, but it has an element which is lacking to the group preceding it, an element of turning away. The last group of five is 'static' if we speak in comparison with the groups which lie between the falls, for its movement is of another order, an ascent and descent: the raising of Christ on the cross and the descent into the tomb.

In relation to these four groups, the three falls themselves may be considered as consequent upon the group of stations preceding them, or as prelude to what lies next ahead. By considering them

so we gather something of what they are and why they are there. They mark out the map of the Way. It is not by chance that they appear where they do, for the Way itself is a reality having objectively defined contours. What in the figure of Jesus is the posture of falling is, in the Way itself, an ascent or descent to another level or depth of reality.

This must be so unless it be certain that the falls signify literally no more than they portray. But the intelligibility of the falls and of the grouping of the stations by means of them is itself a sufficient answer to this objection. Before going on to consider this grouping in more detail we may note that if the falls were meant to express only the stumbling of a cruelly enfeebled and overburdened man, then the decreasing interval between the first and second and the second and third would have some explanation in the increasing exhaustion of the cross-bearer. But in that case the abruptness of the first fall upon the acceptance of the cross would be unexplained. And again, in that case why not four falls separated by three, two and one stations respectively? The drop from three to one may express increasing weariness but not, on the face of it, as if that were the principal thing expressed.

The first fall follows immediately upon the acceptance of the Cross. At first sight this fall expresses the seriousness of the Cross. It is the burden that none but he can carry, and in token of this as soon as he receives it he falls under its weight. And we may note that iconographically it is of more significance that the Saviour should be depicted as falling at all than that he should so appear a given number of times. Nevertheless for the perfection of the Way three falls were required. In principle the significance of our Lord's falling is contained in this first fall, more even than in the others. In order to see how this is so we must proceed to the others and then return to it.

We have seen that the second fall comes as a conclusion to the series of stations in which, through Mary, Christ has given to us in the persons of Simon and Veronica a share in his own cross-bearing and the imprint of his own divine Face. The heart which acknowledges these gifts sees him as emptied by them of all that was communicable to us in the action and compassion of this life. He falls exhausted of the life he has given us; and yet at the eighth station he has risen again.

This eighth station, not so much in itself as from the point of

view of one coming by degrees to understand the contours of the way, is a critical and difficult one. In the previous sequence he has accepted the robust help of Simon, the beautiful and womanly service of Veronica, whose veil is at once a kerchief to wipe the sweat from his face and the token of a heart which turns towards him like a mirror, and he has given abundantly in return. In this, which corresponds to another level of the contemplative life, he says: 'Weep not for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children.' There is no harshness in these words but neither can there be any trace of a twentieth-century politeness—as if the Lord who gave to the tears and the unloosed hair of Magdalene a permanent place in his gospel were emotionally incapable of giving a fitting recompense to tears. 'Weep not for me.' If in the previous sequence our Lord was fully responsive to human sympathy, his words now put him beyond its reach.

That is our first indication of the position this station occupies in the map of the Way. There is present an element of withdrawal. In the meetings with Simon and Veronica a communication at the overt physical level is seen to have a spiritual and interior effect; which effect is not so much a reward of the overt action as a revelation of its interior significance. Thus the conversion of Simon is not something other than his share of the cross-bearing: it is that action itself willed and understood. The imprint of the Holy Face given to Veronica confirms and reveals the grace of her compassion. In both cases the communication is positive both as regards what is done and the effect or inner significance of what is done. In each case a positive external service is rewarded, so to say, by a positive interior identification with Christ.

In the eighth station the case is different. The emotionally positive sympathy of tears is, with divine delicacy, turned aside. 'Weep for yourselves and for your children.' The prophecy of disaster upon Jerusalem and upon the future generations of mankind is indeed a recompense, but of another order. It is a recompense which, though it imparts an insight of the divine prophecy, nevertheless completes the act of withdrawal by offering a sphere to which tears are relevant. Here we may ask ourselves, 'Did not Veronica weep as she offered the sweat-cloth?' It would be strange if she did not. It appears that 'weep not for me' is reserved for proficients upon the spiritual way who would understand that admonition.

There is no need to invoke here the reflection that it was the external actions of Simon and Veronica which were rewarded rather than the inactive tears of the holy women. The Lord who confirmed to Mary her better part which shall not be taken away from her was no activist. In all the way of Christ from the praetorium to the tomb there is a passive aspect of his humanity according to which each step of the way adds to the sum of the divine sufferings. But there is another aspect, that of the divine victory, which shines undiminished in his prostrate body at the foot of Calvary and in the dead body that is taken down from the cross.

The 'Weep not for me' appears then to have the nature of a purgation, so that 'the purgation of the holy women' might be a fitting title for this station. In contrast to the lugubrious readings which are often made before it, this eighth station has the temper of a *sursum corda*—lift your hearts *higher*: to the level, that is, of the victory implicit in Christ's eternal nature. To this victory nothing of ours can contribute. He goes on in his seamless garment alone, leaving tears to be wept for the disasters that are sure to overtake the world that rejects him.

The fall which immediately follows separates this station, with its movement at once onward and interiorly ascending, from the tenth station in which Christ is divested of his seamless garment. The seamless garment of the Word is a figure of the created universe, woven in one piece throughout. Here, his external manifestation laid aside, he stands exposed, clothed only in his naked Godhead.

In the last group of five stations, the first three, the ascent of the Holy Hill, exactly reverse the symbols of mankind's fall and expulsion from Paradise. Christ enters naked into this primordial place as Adam left it clothed. He restores to the Tree its better fruit, and is raised upon it, *ut qui in ligno vincebat ligno quoque vinceretur*. At the foot of the tree, Mary the mother of divine grace is in the place of that mother of all mankind whom the serpent, coiled there, first deceived. The fall which precedes the entry into this primordial place is the severest of all. Iconographically Jesus is shown fallen flat upon his face.

The indications are that the second and third falls mark, in a spiritual sense, two sharp ascents of the Way. The 'level' immediately consequent upon the first fall and the encounter with

Mary is that of the world of men, of reciprocal and affirmative action, and of the beginning of the contemplative life, the reception of the divine image in the heart. To the level reached in the station which immediately follows the second fall belong the *via negativa* and the purgations which govern ascent in the contemplative life. It has a certain correspondence with purgatory and especially with the Mountain of Purgatory in the Divina Commedia. It is a place in which the 'actionless activity' of Christ's eternal nature is victorious over temporal attachment. The 'primordial place' beyond the third fall corresponds to the summit of that mountain. The work that is done here is the *opus perfectionis et deitatis*.

The imagery of wayfaring and of the ascent by stages of the Holy Hill is verified interiorly of life in Christ. He indeed traverses this path in the first place; a path which can be shown to the pilgrim, of which the dust can be gathered in the hand, and he traversed it at a certain and ascertainable time 'under Pontius Pilate' as the creed commemorates. And yet the Way is all in Christ in whom, as St Paul said, all things subsist. The 'levels' to which the Way ascends are identifiable according to all of what they are and signify, in his total reality, in which the humanity, the limbs our hands could have touched, the soul which suffered the betrayal of friends, subsist in the hypostasis of the Word in the unity of the divine essence.

Because of the imperfection of every spatial symbol it is necessary to consider the falls too according to depth: as three giant strides of his into the heart of reality. The reality is his own and it is he who strides thither. This consideration helps us to understand something of the first fall in which is comprised the significance of falling, not twice or three times but of falling at all.

From the point of view we first adopted, the first fall must represent the descent of Christ into the common world of men. At this level having accomplished all that he had to do, he ascends at the place of the second fall to a higher level of his own reality and shows (negatively) the way of that ascent to the holy women. Then, having ascended higher still he puts off the seamless garment at what is spiritually the utmost peak of creation, the 'point' at which all creation dies in God. The same is signified with regard to his own humanity at the third fall where he lies prostrate. What from that point of view is the peak of creation is,

if we speak in terms of depth, its centre, and the Godhead which is above all created nature is also the motionless reality about which all things revolve. If the Holy Hill is the summit of the world, it is also its spiritual centre as the axle is centre of the wheel.

To apply these two perspectives to the first group of stations: according to the first, in station one Christ appears on the hill of the praetorium at once proclaimed and condemned. The questioning of Pilate, the robe, the reed and the crown of thorns, the *Ecce Homo*, Pilate's lavabo before the sacrifice, all have an ironically prophetic character—a character which is present in the whole account of the Passion, for he had said, 'if these should hold their peace the stones will cry out' and from that moment the very stones do—which inerrantly proclaims him who he is. The first station requires his presentation as who he is, more particularly as hero of the Passion. He is presented upon the hill which in point of fact is the praetorium, in point of iconographic requirement the eminence demanded by his first presentation as object of our meditation. From this eminence, having accepted the cross, the proper instrument of his work of salvation, he descends by the first fall into the world of men, the world in which those who are making the meditation find themselves. The journey outwards to station seven accomplishes the work he had to do amongst us at our own level. Station eight commences what is both his return and the possibility of ours by an ascending and arduous route with a re-descent in the deposition and the laying in the tomb.

According to the second perspective he appears at first 'in the centre' of his own divine reality. The utterance of the Word is also his indivisible distinction from the Father, according to the negative formula *Pater non est Filius*. The condemnation which proclaims him is also the utterance of a word, the word of his heavenly Father delivering him to death by the cross: the cross which he accepted before ever he left his Father's side; 'God so loved the world that he sent his son'. Bearing in himself the cruciform principle, archetype of all that proceeds from God by his proceeding from the eternal Father, pattern of all raying of the eternal truth, supreme analogue of the universal structure, he steps outward, a step which could not be other than a fall. It is the primordial fall more ancient than that of Adam, the fall of the Word into the world of its own manifestation: by which fall he also emptied himself taking the form of a servant.

By a metaphysical necessity the meeting with Mary immediately follows the first fall. It is she who gives the divine footfall a place to rest: who gives him birth in the world. Of this birth there are two aspects: an external aspect corresponding to the title *Mater Salvatoris*, according to which he sets forth from his meeting with her in the form of a servant carrying his cross: but there is also an interior aspect corresponding to the title *Mater Divinae Gratiae*, according to which he is born in the heart, rising cruciform therein to rejoin the side of the Father which indeed he has never abandoned. And in the sequence of the stations this interior aspect abides in the heart of Mary who will be present again when it is to be reaffirmed.

From the centre, which is the interior reality of Christ, the outward work of salvation is unwound through Mary to be re-wound again into the centre as she receives his dead body from the cross into her lap to restore it to the tomb, the silence of his eternal resting with the Father. Thus the whole of the divine journey is seen to be wound on two spools, the unfolding of one being an infolding upon the other. And it is the separation of the two spools, which in their deeper reality are one and the same, which makes the divine journey possible and indeed necessary.

We should perhaps note that from the point of view of the external work, from the point of view, that is to say, of creation in its totality, the centre is restored in the twelfth station, our Lord's death on the cross. This indeed is the centre of the universe. About the central point of the cross the whole world spins; and the restoring of the cosmic order was shown in the raising of the cross, where on the ground Jesus was nailed to it, (station eleven) to the upright position—as he said, ‘when I shall be lifted up I shall draw all things to myself’.

The twelfth station represents the Atonement. But atonement has three depths of implication represented by the last three stations: to which depths the names may be given: *Reconciliatio*, *Adunatio*, *Indivisio*. The outward reconciliation is concluded with the death of Christ for the same reason that all creation finds its centre there. But beyond the centre of the created universe is the centre within the centre, the nameless depth of the divine reality. Into that depth he returns (never really having departed therefrom) being received first dead into the lap from which he took life.

The significance of the deposition and burial of Christ is wholly inward. The heart of Mary in which he returns to rest is something anterior to all creation, a 'place' where no creature dwells: or if it is creature it is that purity of the created state which means nothing but God and is beyond the cosmic order. If the purity of Mary means nothing but God, in the last station there remains nothing but God of whose ineffable depth no true word can be spoken.

The journey thither from 'the head' represented by the praetorium to 'the heart' which is God's tomb—the only place, as Pascal said, in which Jesus Christ found rest—is the meditation of the stations, a meditation of which, objectively, the effect is to realize what is signified therein. And the meditation, together with the realization which is its deeper counterpart, takes place and is concluded wholly in Christ. It is the way from this saying of his, 'The Father is greater than I' to this other saying, 'I and the Father are one' followed to the end that 'They all may be one as thou Father in me and I in thee'.



PRAY THE ROSARY

ROLAND POTTER, O.P.

TIME and again we have been urged, as individuals, in our homes, in our schools, and everywhere, to say the Rosary. Surely we must now begin to put the stress on *praying* the Rosary. We are concerned about the very soul of this devotion, and so about the immensely more important part of any Rosary. As the soul is always more important than the body, so too meditation of the Rosary should always have priority over any merely material recitation of the beads. This should be obvious to all. Yet how often do we slip into careless ways of talking. It is very easy for a priest to tell you, 'for your penance, say a decade of the Rosary'. Or, perhaps, two friends may be passing a church, and one will say to the other: 'Let's drop in and say a Rosary. . .'

We need to start by correcting our ways of talking; no more 'saying the Rosary', but instead 'praying the Rosary' or 'meditating our Rosary'.

Now if we urge people to *pray* the Rosary we are, in effect, calling upon all, even the humblest and most simple and the most backward in the things of the spirit, calling upon all to pray and to meditate, and so to reach after sublimities in the things of God. Real inward prayer is asked of all. Yet such prayer is difficult; and many will be tempted to say: 'I cannot meditate'. And anyway it may be objected that inward prayer cannot be ordered of us, produced at will. You cannot *make* another person pray, for prayer is a raising of the mind and heart to God, precisely that mind and heart which is only known to God. Prayer is not something commanded, as we are sometimes commanded in matters of external compliance. No doubt, but then neither can a man be commanded to love. And yet love *is* commanded: 'You shall love your God with all your strength. . .' (Exodus 20, 2; Deut. 6, 5). St Thomas explains that faith is a necessary pre-supposition as regards the commandments. In other words, a command to love God above all else supposes that we have faith. So, too, a command to pray supposes that we have faith; and all the commandments suppose that we have faith, and so our minds open to that all-loving God who may ask of us what he wills.

Certain it is that an ever-growing and ever more enlightened faith is indispensable for anything like meditation of the Rosary. The greater the faith, the greater will be the chance of true mental prayer, as well as spiritual profit, indulgences, graces and favours.

It is because of some such intensity of faith that quite simple people can make great spiritual progress through the Rosary. Such great faith will compel one who prays the Rosary so to give himself 'to the end of prayer, namely to God, and to that for which he is praying . . . and simple folk can do this too; sometimes too, so intense is the application of their minds to God that they become oblivious of all else'. We like to think that in these words St Thomas is speaking of his own experience in prayer.

An intense faith of this sort cleaves to our living God who reveals himself in his mysteries. At every moment in the praying of the Rosary there is implied a deliberate attention to mysteries of faith. That deliberate attention results in meditation or that kind of reflection which is all a prayer.

The mysteries which we consider in the Rosary are wholly supernatural, and are principally focussed on that 'fullness of the times' when God, after long patience with the human race, at last spoke to us through his Son (Hebrews 1, 1). Let us dwell a moment on this 'fullness of the times'. The first word of God was creative: 'He spoke and they were made'. Subsequently God spoke again through his prophets; 'spoke' too in that he moulded and fashioned the whole course of sacred history and the fates of a Chosen People, who were to give to the world the Saviour of the world. Thus at the fullness of the times the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, for us and for our salvation.

Now the truths which we consider in the mysteries of the Rosary are precisely those truths which relate to the fullness of the times. For that reason they are in a certain sense (while remaining mysteries) clearer to us. For they are truths about God who came near to us in the Person of our Saviour.

As we pray over and ponder such mysteries we must surely, bit by bit, imperceptibly yet certainly, be drawn to genuine contemplation of the mysteries.

Perhaps it is possible to suggest the general course of some such prayer. First comes a total acceptance, a certain whole and enriching grasp of the revealed truth which we are considering. This 'grasp' will be all the more effective if the gifts of understanding and wisdom are brought to bear on the truth considered. Understanding is particularly relevant when our whole intent, at the outset, is to peer into the mysteries of God and to see more profoundly into the meanings of Holy Scripture; wisdom in turn enables us in some sense to savour 'the things that are above', to draw benefit from an experience which is wholly born of supernatural love. As often as not it is then but a short step to a certain serene delight in the supreme truths. It is by some such process, with the progressive elimination of laboured reasonings, that meditation can pass into a really contemplative prayer.

There is no doubt that pondering and praying the mysteries of the Rosary, in this or kindred ways, may well lead to some of the highest states of prayer.

We have travelled far from the brute mechanism and routine of the Rosary materially recited, from the parrot-cry of 'say your Rosary' which we can hear all too often.

Now let us turn to a second point: the meditation of the Rosary as a way of preaching, as a mode of teaching the truths of God. This teaching and preaching will of course be for ourselves as much as for others. This doctrinal function of the Rosary, as we may call it, is important historically. It seems certain that St Dominic thought of the Rosary as first of all a method of preaching, and then secondly, as a mode of prayer. Consideration of the mysteries in this case becomes a means of deeper understanding, a quest for what we can know at least in part. We all need to have that sort of faith which seeks understanding. There is a kind of yearning for some grasp of the mysteries of faith which corresponds in some sense to that yearning for Christian perfection which should be in the heart of every true believer. A desire to understand in some measure is not pretentious but legitimate: we are in fact in line with the suggestion of the Vatican Council, and 'seeking, through God's giving, some understanding of the mysteries' (*aliquam Deo dante mysteriorum intelligentiam*, Denz. 1796). The Rosary meditations are focussed on essentials in the history of our salvation, for we consider the Coming on earth, the suffering and then the triumph of our Lord. So it comes about that when praying the Rosary we turn over and over in our minds 'that which links the mysteries one to another as also to man's ultimate end'.

The Rosary should also foster in us good reactions, good Catholic instincts, in such wise that we can fully bring into play the 'analogy of faith' as it is called, whenever we relate truth with truth. Such reflection is made easy by the Rosary which allows much liberty and range in our reflections which should all transform themselves into genuine prayer. After long centuries of Catholic usage, the fifteen mysteries have come to stay in the Church's great body of prayer, and they cover a vast range of doctrine. We might often be tempted to say (as many do when they first perceive the rich content of the Church's liturgical books): This is too much! Perhaps it is. In practice, however, we know that it is sufficient for each mystery to have been called out, and for him who is praying the Rosary to have in some degree adverted to that announcing of the mystery. He will then as a child of God, led by the Spirit of God, fasten his mind and give the love of his heart to each or one only of the mysteries, or to one aspect only, or to the words of those greatest of prayers which

he is saying, or to the relations of the mystery proposed to other mysteries of faith, or its reference to our life, or to that of our Lord on earth, or to that of Christ continued, which is the Church . . . and so on to God himself.

A certain freedom in the range of possible meditation is surely something valuable which must be retained. It is not more legislation which is wanted, more rules and external methods of reciting the Rosary, but more freedom of spirit.

The spirit breathes where he wills, and you hear his voice: but you know not whence he comes or whither he goes (John 3, 8).

Let us content ourselves with the fifteen mysteries as now commonly proposed and received in the usage of the Church; these, in fact, constitute an abbreviated *Summa*. Taking these as a basis, let us strive to break through the veil which is upon our eyes and hearts so as to know and love the living God beyond all mystery: Truly thou art a hidden God, O God of Israel, our Saviour.

Finally, by all means let us look out for and value any possible means of furthering *meditation* on the Rosary mysteries. Modern and contemporary efforts in the Rosary apostolate seem to have been almost wholly concentrated on the material recitation of the Rosary; thus we know of sung Rosaries, or alternately sung and said, or broken up in various ways, or mimed or acted, or used to 'fill up' a Holy Hour. Rather let us stress the prayer, and mental prayer aspect of the Rosary, and look upon it as a powerful means of attaining union with God by knowledge and love. What a progress would have been made in the Kingdom of God if our Catholic people had come to realize that a 'perpetual Rosary' is not primarily an unbroken series, a twenty-four-hour day, of 'Our Father' and 'Hail Mary', but a constant attempt of devoted people here on earth to focus minds and wills on God, so that God is actually known and loved unceasingly in some favoured corners of the world.

Let us pray then with great freedom of spirit, content with what is laid down by the Church as regards indulgences and spiritual benefit, and all the while seek to pray better, to meditate more profoundly.

There are two main ways of proceeding in our meditations. The first is when the fifteen mysteries are related to some theme which is extrinsic to the Rosary itself. This method is well

exemplified in *Rosary Meditations* (Anon. T.O.S.D. Burns & Oates). There we are given models of meditations:

- (a) For peace. Each of the fifteen mysteries is related to the theme of peace.
- (b) For faith, hope, charity. The same is done with each of these theological virtues.
- (c) So too with the liturgical seasons, from Advent to Trinity Sunday, etc.
- (d) For a good death.

The other method is used when each mystery is considered *in itself* or intrinsically. We then have read or considered the biblical narrative very closely, and are striving to arrive at an ever more profound exegesis and savouring of the narrative. This 'way' is that of the true exegete or lover of the things of God who brings out of the treasury of the faith 'new things and old,' and, as a way, it is always fruitful in its results.

Still, whether we adopt the first or the second way, or yet another, God will perfect that work of grace which he himself has begun in us, and can fill us with a joy beyond all our deserts, for 'with joy you will draw waters from the Saviour's fountains'.



THE HOLY SOULS

DOMINIC SIRE, O.P.

WORSHIP is the outcome of living faith, the expression of a sincere conviction in some external and visible form. There is innate in every society and individual the urge to communicate and share conviction. Good naturally spreads itself in companionship. The Church is a society both human and divine; divine in its origin and support and human in its composition. It gives effect to this urge in two main streams, the liturgy and private devotion. As a society its worship is found in the liturgy, but the individual members of that society express themselves in a variety of private devotions. These two streams are nevertheless vitally connected. The liturgy of its very nature and because it is the official and common worship of the body politic remains somewhat static and is carefully prescribed and ruled by laws. It has even a common and universal language, at

least for the Latin Church. Private devotion—if it be authentic—is but the extension of the liturgy. It will necessarily have much that belongs to the individual needs and characteristics of a nation or civilization, yet it breathes the same spirit and expresses the same fundamental truths. Both have the same dogmatic and theological roots. As a result the teaching and customs of the Church can be gleaned from the liturgical and devotional practice of the Church especially where these have been constant for many generations.

It would be impossible in one short article to deal with the liturgy as a whole or the constant devotional life of the Church. The historical aspect will not even be considered, but two points will be taken and these very closely allied to one another.

The Church's main act of worship is to be found in the timeless and infinite sacrifice of the Mass. This is ultimately the essential and radical act of worship from which all else stems. It is the act of redemption whereby we have had the gates of Heaven opened afresh to us. Calvary and the Mass are one and the same sacrifice, and it is from Calvary that the whole life of grace, the sacramental life, flows. And this act continues daily on our altars in response to the command, 'Do this for a commemoration of me'. This is indeed the pearl of great price, the inestimable jewel, and we find it set in the mounting of the Divine Office. This again is a universal act of prayer and praise solemnized, it is true, by the monks, religious and priests, but nevertheless shared by the whole Church for it is the Church's prayer. The monk solemnly chanting the Church's daily prayer, the priest reciting his Breviary, is praying for and with the whole Church, and every member of that Church has his share in this daily song of praise. Its very purpose is to uphold the central sacrifice of the Mass and to surround it with the solemnity it deserves.

Here then we may look for an expression of the Church's teaching, and here we shall find a constant refrain. In that part of the Mass which remains unalterable, day by day we pray for 'thy servants and handmaids here present' offering the sacrifice; we recall the apostles, the early martyrs and saints, the rulers of God's people and Church today. We recall thereby the universality of the Church in both time and place. But we pray also and equally for 'thy servants and handmaids who have gone before us and sleep in the sleep of peace'. We are reminded forcefully of their need and right to our prayers, and in particular of the efficacy of

the saving sacrifice of Christ's Body and Blood. Purgatory as a doctrine is taken for granted, and with it the fact of the existence of the Holy Souls detained and awaiting their final happiness. These souls are safe, it is true, but are not yet enjoying the eternal vision of God. We are reminded that this sacrifice is truly ours by God's infinite mercy and goodness, and that we can and should offer it for their benefit and to relieve them from their torments. When on special occasions the Requiem is offered it is not infrequently ushered in by the solemn recitation of the Office of the Dead. In the daily recitation of the Office usually said in sections, each section is terminated by a phrase known to every Catholic: 'May the souls of the faithful departed through the mercy of God rest in peace.' The whole doctrine of Purgatory and the teaching concerning the Holy Souls is thus taken for granted in these great acts of worship, and they are permeated with its spirit. No less do we find this same spirit underlying private devotion or non-liturgical practice. Most forms of morning and night prayers, grace before and after meals include the refrain of the Divine Office: 'May the souls of the faithful departed through the mercy of God rest in peace.'

In this land of ours we find up and down the country the remains of chantry chapels whose very purpose was prayer for the souls of the departed and in particular their founders. A college still stands at Oxford, the very foundation of which and whose name proclaims the Holy Souls and the age-old traditions and beliefs of the Church at least in this country.

The Reformation, in breaking with the ancient Church, had logically to set aside its ancient customs. The cold comfort of Calvin removed for ever the word 'hope' from the vocabulary of his followers and reduced the supernatural virtues to two if not one. Luther made good works a futile waste of time, which made charity look small and made nonsense of the great words of St Paul to the Corinthians. Both of necessity had to cast aside the doctrine of Purgatory and all devotion to the Holy Souls, since such teaching was bound up with the theology of the Mass which was swept away with the debris of all other good works. Hope through the Blood of Christ and his Sacrifice was the very marrow of the liturgy and the devotion of the faithful. The Holy Souls vanished into a pit of despair in consequence. Life was robbed of all its moral significance. God was no longer a merciful

and loving Father but just a capricious tyrant with little regard for justice or mercy.

Yet had not Christ said, 'All power is given to me in Heaven and on earth', and again, 'As the Father hath sent me so do I send you'? Because he will be with us all days, so this very same power has been handed down to the Church. The Father had sent him and even so he has sent us to teach and instruct all nations. This almighty power he gave us when through his mercy and goodness he gave the infinite sacrifice of his only-begotten Son. This power is the power of saving. To set all this aside together with its all too obvious implications is to spurn God's teaching. The reformers might well have been called the deformers.

Devotion to the Holy Souls and the doctrine of Purgatory are writ large on every Christian monument and in every page of the history of the Church. They are part of the Church's tradition and fabric and these the Church has faithfully and jealously preserved against all opposition. The Sacrifice of the Mass and the Divine Office are the prayers of all—past, present and to come. This is and always has been the teaching of the Church and it is our bounden duty to give it place and effect in our lives. What the Church works we also must work. It is only by our belief in Purgatory and our devotion to the Holy Souls that we bring reality to our belief expressed in the Apostles' Creed when we say that we believe in the Communion of Saints. Only by our active participation in the Mass and constant remembrance of the Holy Souls do we preach the constant teaching of the Church and our belief in God's mercy. The priest can never offer his Mass or recite his Breviary but he is reminded of this teaching, and he must remember at the same time that he is but the unworthy minister of God's people. He does not pray alone; he prays with and for the whole Church in every age. The faithful, too, must be conscious of their participation in this mystical body and all its sacrifices. What better way than a constant and real devotion to the Holy Souls? 'Lord, that we might better understand the power that is ours through the merits of Jesus Christ.'



In the OCTOBER number of THE LIFE OF THE SPIRIT a special supplement of book reviews will be included.

THE EMBRACING PRAYER

A LAYMAN

AN article on 'The Divine Office as a Method of Prayer' in THE LIFE OF THE SPIRIT, August 1951, by Dom Bede Griffiths, impressed me as having much to say that is of use to all Christians both lay and religious, especially in these times when a slow but deep-seated revolution in spirituality is taking place. Perhaps, however, the most significant sentence of all comes in the opening paragraph. After telling the story of the young priest who studied the psalms so carefully that to him they ceased to be prayers at all, the writer says:

'This is perhaps an extreme example, but it illustrates a fact of great importance, namely, that prayer is not necessarily an exercise of discursive thought, and the study of a certain kind can be an obstacle rather than an assistance to prayer.'

This is interesting indeed, because the objection immediately made to any suggestion that the laity might be encouraged to use the Divine Office as a private prayer in English has been the obscurity of the psalms and the difficulty of expounding them to the uninstructed. So, as a general rule, the people are cut off from and completely ignorant of what St Ambrose called 'a blessing for the people . . . the praise of God, the tribute of the nation, the common language of all . . . the voice of the Church', of the prayers which, the Holy Father says in *Mediator Dei*, 'encompass the full round of the day and sanctify it'. I venture, therefore, to offer as a footnote to this article the experience of one insignificant layman in a search for prayer and the discovery of it in the Divine Office.

The first introduction to the psalms—or rather the first view of them in their proper perspective—came through the missal. It always seems logical to begin a book at the beginning, and at the beginning of every missal is the 'Preparation for Mass', which consists first and foremost of psalms, some of the most beautiful in the psalter. 'How lovely are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts! My soul longeth and fainteth for the courts of the Lord.' Is there any better introduction to the Mass than Psalm 83? Does it really need a lot of expounding and explanation before it can enter the mind as a prayer?

So they go on. 'Convert us, O God our Saviour; and turn away thy anger from us' (84); For thou, O Lord, art sweet and mild: and plenteous in mercy unto all that call upon Thee' (85). Then, like a flash of light in the following psalm, 115, we come upon, 'What shall I render to the Lord for all the things he has rendered to me? I will take the chalice of salvation; and I will call upon the Lord.' The mind leaps forward to the very heart and climax of the Mass when the priest prepares to receive the Precious Blood with those very words, first inspired centuries before the Mass was instituted. More than anything does that declare the extraordinary and prophetic manner in which the psalms are linked up with Christian prayer and worship. The Mass indeed in all its parts, variable and non-variable, is built up on the psalms; they lead up to it directly and precisely out of the long past of the Chosen Race; and in the liturgical order of the Christian day they frame the Mass, as it were, in a crescendo of preparation and in the quiet aftermath of the evening hours.

The next step, quite by chance, is Compline, learnt and sung at a summer school of the Society of St Gregory. Here for the first time is a glimpse of the shape and content of the Divine Office. (I do not think anybody should be surprised at this ignorance; I have since found it in almost every Catholic I know.) In the serene, melodious cadences and steady business-like rhythm of the chant is experienced almost exactly that particular influence of the Divine Office described by Father Bede in that same article of his: 'The regular recitation of the psalms, whether to oneself or in choir, can create a rhythm which after a short time will be found to produce a state of recollection quite naturally.' And in that great cry of hope and trust, Psalm 90, we come across that link with the Gospels—quoted so aptly by the devil—as he always can!—'For he hath given his angels charge concerning thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. In their hands they shall bear thee up lest perhaps thou stumble against a stone.' All these sudden points of contact bring a realization of the unity of the whole structure of the Church, the unbreakable link between the Old Testament and the New, and an appreciation of the historical reality of the whole thing. These quick meditations are a definite help to prayer and give life to the words quite apart from their meaning.

Compline and Vespers can be enjoyed at a summer school, but in how few public churches in Catholic England can they be so

enjoyed? So it had to be private recitation; a little book, *Benedictine Hours*, is very useful for that and adds Terce to the repertoire. At every enlargement so there is an expanding of appreciation and a tightening of contract: all the Introits to Mass are psalms, but it took the reading of 'I spake of thy testimonies before kings and was not ashamed' (Ps. 118, Terce of Sunday in the Benedictine Office) and its identification with *Loquebar de testimonis tuis in conspectu regum*, of the Common of a Virgin and Martyr to bring them all into their context.

It seemed impossible to get hold of Prime (this is post-war). The C.T.S. had issued a little pamphlet of it but it was out of print and not likely to be re-issued: no demand for it. The *Horae Diurnae* was available, but expensive, and English was necessary. Father Bede is right when he says that it is the rhythm of the words that counts as much as the meaning; but still it is through the English that the ordinary person receives the notion of contact with the praying Church. So Terce was said before Mass every morning, followed by the 'Preparation' in the missal; and Compline at night. That was all there seemed time for in a full day, but even this limited effort gave a knowledge of unity with all the Church in praise and prayer.

Then, again by a lucky chance, there was acquired the whole Roman Breviary in English (published in 1937 and practically unobtainable now). There opened out new vistas of prayer and knowledge. The first psalm of Prime on Sunday (117) led straight into the Easter liturgy: 'This is the day that the Lord hath made . . .', straight to one of the sublime truths of the Gospels: 'The stone which the builders rejected; the same is become the head of the corner.' Prime of Wednesday had the Lavabo of the Mass: 'I will wash my hands among the innocent: and will compass thy altar, O Lord' (Ps. 25). Dotted about the psalms, like old friends, are so many familiar versicles and responsories: Compline, Thursday, 'O God, come to my assistance: O Lord, make haste to help me' (Ps. 69); Vespers, Tuesday, 'Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth' (Ps. 123). Every Friday at Prime those terrible phrases pound the soul: 'But I am a worm and no man: the reproach of men and the outcast of the people. All they that saw me have laughed to scorn: they have spoken with their lips and wagged the head.' And—the Jews can be heard grimly fulfilling the prophecy to the letter—'He hoped in the

Lord, let him deliver him.' A few lines further on are the words read so often in the Passion and repeated in the *En Ego*. 'They have dug my hands and feet, they have numbered all my bones . . . They parted my garments amongst them: and upon my vesture they cast lots.'

So, link by link as the Hours are read is forged that chain of prayer and prophecy which binds together the Gospels, the Psalms and the Mass, that complex unity which is the heart and circumference of the Faith. Now Prime and Terce are said in the morning before Mass; it means getting up earlier but the reward of grace is one that can be felt. On Sundays it is possible to add the other Hours, Sext and None, to the Thanksgiving. Whenever feasible, for instance on a long train journey, the whole Office can be said. Compline of Sunday is committed to memory in Latin according to the Benedictine Office, and can be said anywhere—usually in the Underground coming home from work, when in spite of distractions, it seems to round off the day.

In a Protestant childhood the psalms were a meaningless monotony. Seen now in their true context, without any exegetical or linguistic study, the discovery is made that their repetition never palls; every week as the familiar words come round they come as new, bringing new thoughts and contacts, fresh inspirations. The flow is inexhaustible, and one appreciates as never before the preoccupation of the psalmist with water and fountains as images, and sees the source of the imagery of the saints, such as Teresa of Avila and many others. The whole sequence and order of the Office is a living stream.

Moreover, closer acquaintance with the Breviary brings one also in touch with the Fathers of the Church, with all the Old Testament, with the Gospels and the Epistles, in the Lessons at the Nocturns, so one not only reaches to the source of all modern spiritual writing but finds oneself really taking part in the liturgical cycle of the Church and in a small and still inadequate way of applying that desire of the Holy Father in *Mediator Dei*: 'Let the souls of Christians be like altars on each one of which a different phase of the sacrifice, offered by the High Priest, comes to life again, as it were. . . .'

I hope that these inadequate comments will lead other lay people to discover the treasures of the Divine Office and gain from them all that I have gained. I hope too that they may

induce priests to encourage those who show interest and help them to find their way through the intricacies of the Rubrics, for the Office is, as Father Bede says, an exceedingly complex structure; but once mastered it does provide for simple people an unfailing source of prayer and devotion which never cloyes and which becomes not exactly automatic but regular and self-absorbing.

I think too that the liturgical movement would gain much if, instead of insisting so much on music and so on, organizers of schools and conferences would give practical instruction on the Breviary itself, how to apply the instructions of the Ordo, sponsor articles on those lines, and get more and more people to take part in the recital of the Office in English. It is surely in the interest of the Church that people should clearly comprehend the catholic and communal nature of the Divine Office; that it is indeed 'a prayer which embraces all mankind and reveals the meaning of all history'.



HUGH OF SAINT VICTOR ON THE CELESTIAL HIERARCHY OF DENYS THE AREOPAGITE

CLARE KIRCHBERGER

Hugh of Saint-Victor's Commentary on Denys' Celestial Hierarchies profoundly influenced the writers on mystical theology of the twelfth and following centuries. Richard is greatly indebted to him and makes use of his ideas and his examples. The following extract from the section on the Seraphim in Book VI of the Commentary (chapter VII in Denys) shows how Hugh transferred what Denys said of Angels to human love and contemplation. The insistence on love rather than knowledge as the means of union and contemplation far outstrips what Denys thought and is responsible for the whole of the later trend of mystical theories. This passage is the source of many of Richard's illustrations in the Benjamin Major. Hugh's commentary on this section is longer than that on any other part of the work and he obviously lets himself go freely on the subject which was dearest to his heart.

The translation of the appropriate sentences of Denys is taken from that published by the Editors of the 'Shrine of Wisdom' in their version of the Mystical Theology and Celestial Hierarchies. (Brook, 1949.)

'The name Seraphim clearly indicates their ceaseless and eternal revolution about Divine Principles, their heat and keenness, the exuberance of their intense, perpetual, tireless activity and their elevative and energetic assimilation of those below, kindling and firing them to their own heat, and wholly purifying them by a burning and all-consuming flame . . .'

IF I were to say what I feel, I should first confess that I have heard words not spoken to a man or not spoken by man. For it seems to me so great a thing that a man should have said these things that nothing higher could be attributed to man. Perhaps these words were born of those which a man might hear but which it is not lawful for a man to utter.¹ For he who spoke or taught these things had attained to the third heaven and entered into Paradise, and there through the Word had heard words of God, altogether secret. And then had come the silence to which man's ear cannot attain, which none should hear until he can understand. They were heard inwardly where they were spoken, and they could not come forth to the place where man is. Therefore he that was within, and greatly inward, could hear them inwardly and within; but they were not to be uttered to those without, lest those outside might forsake them, if they had not been called by him who was within. Words are born of words as words were born of the Word. From words which ought to be kept in the heart come words which may be brought forth outwardly, great words from the boundless life, dark words from the hidden things, deep from the impenetrable depths; whether these things are heard by us or known by the understanding, I know not.

These are the very words which the disciple of the Master, and the master of the disciples, gave us to examine. For the first disciple of the Word heard words from the Word, and he was made a teacher by other words and had a disciple whom he made a teacher, and descending from him, for our instruction, a voice as it were from heaven, echoed through the world and filled our ears with amazement until at last it enlightened our hearts with a revelation of truth. Therefore those who were men but could not yet understand divine things said that it thundered, for they were dumbfounded but not yet instructed. Others who were a little more enlightened but not yet set on fire, thought it was an

¹ 2 Corinthians, 12, 4

angel and did not understand that it was God. So we also have heard the thunder of the celestial voice and began to wonder but were not yet illumined. But if we were awakened to wonder, we should be converted by wonder and so by our conversion we should be enlightened. And if we begin to hear and understand those sweet words, we shall not only wonder but also love them, if indeed, we yield to their grace. If they are not loved they will not be understood, nor can they be loved if we do not taste them. So what then? Why did we hear if we do not understand, and how can we understand if we do not love? I say on my part that if I am not bold about love yet I never cease from wondering. Perhaps by this wonder I may come to understanding and if I am little stirred to knowledge, yet shall I be moved to love. And meantime love shall be my food until contemplation is born of it and contemplation leads to illumination.

What is this motion of the angels, 'always moving and unchangeably revolving'? If we were to say that love is thus, we might be thought to have said very little, for we know not what love is. For he who speaks of love never says little, unless perhaps he says that love is short! But this man who speaks so much of love did not mean its shortness. He says, 'it is mobile and unceasing and hot, keen¹ and most fervent'. Mobile because it is life, unceasing for it is perpetual, hot because it is love, penetrating for it is wisdom. Is this not enough? He calls it life, describes it as everlasting, sets it down as love, adds wisdom thereto. And all this is contained in one act of loving and is one love. How is love also life? Hear that beloved lover commending love! 'He that loveth not abideth in death' (1 John 3, 14). So therefore love is life and what a life! Charity never faileth. And if charity never faileth, love is everlasting life. And what is love? Where is such heat and fervour found in love? As they walked in love, grew warm and fervid, what did they say of Jesus on the road, whom they heard but did not recognise in the way?² They walked and were moved and were driven by the impatience of love, as if to stand still were not to be. For mobility and heat belong to love so that love may not be sluggish. So they walked with the movement of love and glowed with its heat, saying:

¹ The word used by Hugh following Eriugena's translation is *acutum*, which has both the sense of something piercing and intelligent or clear-sighted, sometimes sharp or passionate.

² Luke 24, 32.

Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked with us by the way?' Because they walked they had this mobility and because they were loving they had this heat, but they had not the penetration for they had, as yet, no knowledge. So because they lacked this intelligence they heard the words: 'O fools and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken.'¹ Therefore they were stunned and slow to understand, but not lukewarm or lazy in loving. So first they loved and afterwards understood, so that there might be intelligence as well as warmth in their love. First warmth, then insight, for he said not 'penetrating and warm' but 'warm and penetrating', even as it was first mobile and then unceasing, so that 'mobility' might stir us to enquiry, and 'unceasingness' that we might be confirmed in perseverance.

Warmth to revive the senses, but keenness that love might penetrate to the understanding. For he indicates that sharp urge of love and that vehemence of ardent desire, which bears in upon the loved one, entering and penetrating so that he may be there where the beloved is, with him and in him, so that he may be not only warmed by him but pass over into him by point of desire. For a man might be warm, warmed as it were from afar, if he were satisfied thus to love an absent one and not to see him who is present, nor to possess that intimate presence. But the love of the angelic hierarchy would not be perfect thus, nor very attractive, unless it attained that keenness, passing through all things until it reached the beloved, or indeed passing into him. If you do not go on into the beloved your love is still external, and you have no penetration in love. But you are divided and remain so in sluggishness; you are outside him and are not made one with him. For Love desires to unite you with himself and therefore he penetrates all things and draws as near as he can to the other one.

Consider how penetrating was their love of whom it was said: 'Whither the spirit was to go they went'.² For the impulse was urgent or fluid, as it says in some other place, of the keenness of love. And I think the person who was speaking was the Bride, nor was it right to mention anything hard or rough (in speaking) to a timid person, full of fears. Therefore this thing is called liquid instead of sharp, in the blandishments of love. For liquid penetrates as a sharp thing does, and will not desist until it come

Luke 25.
Ezekiel 25-14

into the inmost place. Thus it is said: 'My soul melted when he spake, I sought him and found him not.'¹ She sought him because she was melted for him, if it were not so she would not be running after him but would remain hard and would not enter into him. But now she is melted and begins to run but does not find him at once, until at last she reaches him. So the quality of unceasing perseverance was also necessary that she might enter in and penetrate and say: 'I held him and would not let him go until I had brought him into my mother's house, and into the chamber of her that conceived me.'²

'I will bring him into my mother's house and into the chamber of her that conceived me.' So he will come in to you and you shall go in to him. You will enter into him when he shall come in to you. When love of him enters into your heart and penetrates and when love of him touches the depths of your heart, then it is that he enters into you and you come into your very self, so that you may go in to him. Therefore bring him into yourself but not in such a way that he remains or lives just outside yourself, at the gate or in the forecourt or at the door of your house or even just inside your house. For passionate love will not think much of this love or call it great unless it finds its way into the sleeping chamber and into the bed, penetrating to the interior and resting in your inmost heart. And I say further, he may not delight in your mother's bed unless he is brought in there where love is most tender and delights most sweet, so that he may find no rigid or obstinate human resistance. But all shall be melted and made soft by the fire of delight. Let, then, no resistance stand in the way, that charity may reach unto the inmost place, and let love be passionate to penetrate all things. We had to say this of the penetrating and melting nature of love that you may understand how great is the power of love and delight. This can be understood since love surpasses knowledge and is greater than the intelligence. For loving is more than understanding and love enters in and draws near where knowledge stays outside. Nor is this surprising for love always anticipates and is always confident, love rushes in impetuously without tarrying. Therefore it is both penetrating and liquid, piercing all things, and it follows the urge of its ardent desire until it reaches

¹ Song of Songs, 5, 6. Vulgate.

² *Ibid*, 3, 4.

beloved, being incapable of pretence. Moreover, because of love thirsts to enter into the beloved, and to be with him and near to him that, if it were possible, he might be the same thing as the beloved. It is this urgency which suffices to penetrate all things and to enter into the secret place so that no power can prevent it from reaching what it loves. 'Who', says the Apostle, 'shall separate us from the love of Christ? Persecution or famine or the sword?'¹ And so because love is sharp it cannot be held, but it passes through and penetrates, escaping freely and running to its desire.

Now if the heat and keenness of love is so great, what will the power of the next word signify? Namely the glowing ardour of love (*superfervidum*). For we must now enlarge a little on what this epithet adds to the foregoing virtues. And we are called to reflect on what more we mean when we say 'glowing' rather than 'heat and keenness'.

For you know that a glowing object is projected outside itself by the violence of its heat and burning and is taken up above itself and makes a great movement through the force of that covered and invisible conflagration that produces the glowing. That which is not seen is the latent heat of the conflagration which is within and moves; but that which is moved is seen; and from what we see we conceive and understand the great power and intense strength and exceeding violence of that which is hidden and not seen. Who can worthily compare the striving of material things with the majesty of invisible things? A natural spectacle serves as an example. We see glowing come from heat and from humidity, or rather it occurs in the humidity through heat. We see in what way heat penetrates humidity without disturbance so that having entered in, it may powerfully and silently cast humidity out. It infiltrates invisibly so as to remove it openly, as if it were unwilling to suffer the presence of that humidity. It hastens to eject it, as if moved by some impulse of vehement indignation. Thus warmth passes into keenness and this develops into ardour. That which was first both piercing and able to circumvent the resistance of love and capable of penetrating all things, now becomes a glowing fire, an inward thing, unable to keep still within itself. For love is piercing when it despises all things and passes through them, and it is

glowing when it condemns and abandons itself. For he who desires solely that which he loves, despises himself in comparison with the object of his love. For his desire would not be for love alone, if he loved himself as well as his love. And he could not love thus except by the power of a great and singular love. So that for love of him who alone is to be loved, the man himself who loves is in some way despised by himself. Therefore it comes to pass, in a wonderful way, that by the fire of love he is lifted up to him who is above himself, he begins to be cast out by the power of love and to go out from himself. How great is the burning and seething in the heart of a man who has conceived the fire of heavenly love, when he is made eager for him alone who is above all, and by thought and desire is cast out from himself and raised above himself. And how shall he think about himself at all, while he is loving God only?



REVIEWS

MEDICAL GUIDE TO VOCATIONS. By René Biot, M.D., and Pierre Galimard, M.D. (Burns and Oates; 18s.)

The importance of health in religious life can hardly be exaggerated. Breakdowns are only too common, and superiors of communities and seminaries may well feel the need of competent medical advice in considering the acceptance of candidates whose health is in any way in doubt. Health includes so much more than the mere absence of serious disease; it is a question whether an individual's health will stand up to the particular kinds of strain involved in different types of community life or in seminary training.

This book, by two French doctors, is the fruit of their own experience in these matters. It is a disappointing book, at least in this translation, which is American, with American spelling. The authors are very much in earnest and seem determined to omit nothing. They begin with a philosophical section on the unity of soul and body, and range through almost every topic bearing upon the health of seminarians, students and religious: canonical legislation, bodily and mental diseases, neuroses, heredity, temperament, aptitudes, the vows, age, dress, diet, asceticism and the vocation of those rejected on medical advice. There are sound principles and good advice to be found, but they are hidden in a maze of technical terms, some of them unknown in English medical parlance. There is little discrimination between the important

and the trivial; principles and minutiae are presented equally in naive and portentous style; and the book is overloaded with long quotations.

The authors are least happy and even seriously misleading in their excursions into theology. They appear to equate the three 'ways' of the spiritual life, purgative, illuminative and unitive, with particular periods of seminary and religious training. Novices and students will appreciate being told that their time in the novitiate or seminary is 'none other than the first' of these three, leading 'to the sacrament of orders and vows'. 'Then a new stage commences, the illuminative way' (p. 157). 'Not that all mystical life is forbidden the novice or seminarian—quite on the contrary' (*sic*). But 'many purely physiological disorders originate in an imperfect practice of ascetic and sometimes mystic exercises' (p. 158).

Obviously a good doctor can be a great help to superiors in advising about the health of beginners. But the authors of this book have attempted too much. It seems a pity, too, that a translation published in London should be not in English, for English readers.

LUKE SMITH, O.P.

CYRIL OF JERUSALEM AND NEMESIUS OF EMESA. Edited by William Telfer. Library of Christian Classics. Vol. IV. (S.C.M. Press; 30s.)

It has not been possible to translate in full in this volume both Cyril's *Catechetical Lectures* and Nemesius's *On the Nature of Man*; St Cyril is therefore represented by selections only. One is tempted to think that it would have been more useful to give Cyril in full and omit the physiological passages from Nemesius and the long excurses into ancient medicine necessary in order to make them intelligible; that Nemesius is not well known does not imply a great claim to be included in a series of this sort.

The introduction to St Cyril, after a brief sketch of his life, goes on to give a most interesting account of the public *catechesis* of converts customary at the time of St Cyril, with descriptions and drawings of the buildings at Jerusalem where he gave it. The translation of the *Lectures* is clear but curiously uneven: brisk, even racy, at times ('For it is on the cards that . . .', p. 179), artificial or over-archaic at others ('set of sun', 'life gotten from life', p. 102).

Very little is known of Nemesius (his book was sometimes attributed to Gregory of Nyssa) beyond the fact that he was bishop of Emesa, a city on the Orontes in Syria, and that he had studied medicine at some time, as is obvious from his book. The translation is smoother than that of St Cyril, but distinctly unreliable. Nemesius's summary of Aristotle's definition of the soul is very faithful and given largely in Aristotle's own words, but the translation on pages 276-77, and the

notes given in explanation, would not lead one to suspect this. Aristotle *does* 'think of soul as latent in matter', and it is 'entelechy' not form that 'has two meanings: first it is the subject of knowledge' (this should read simply 'knowledge': *episteme*), 'then it is the contemplation on our part by which such knowledge is gained'; (this should read 'actual use of knowledge': *theorein kath' epistemen*). The whole passage is gravely misleading, together with other explanations of Aristotle given elsewhere (e.g. on page 259 it is stated that Aristotle's theory of the soul as 'entelechy' represents the soul as an abstraction).

Nemesius is to be found in Migne *P.G.* XL, not in the 60th volume; there is a discrepancy between the Contents page and the sections of the *Third Lecture* actually given.

JEROME SMITH, O.P.

ORDINATION TO THE PRIESTHOOD. By John Bligh, S.J. (Sheed and Ward; 16s.)

The author tells us that this book 'is not a pious meditation on the priesthood, but a liturgical and theological essay written in the belief that a careful analysis of the rite will in the end be more conducive to solid piety than a devotional treatment of the subject could'. The work abounds in such supernatural common sense and should do much to hasten the disappearance of the idea that piety has nothing to gain from theology—a poisonous notion that the biblical and liturgical revival has done much to eliminate.

Father Bligh takes us step by step through the ordination ceremony, scattering in his wake, as every good liturgical scholar should, interesting information about many things under heaven. As a prelude he devotes three chapters to considerations on the nature and powers of Christian priesthood and discusses in detail two theological conundrums, the conditions under which a priest may ordain other priests and the apparent conflict between the Decree for the Armenians of Florence and the Apostolic Constitution of 1947. There is a description of the sources, such as the Apostolic Constitutions of Hippolytus and its numerous brood and the three great sacramentaries. There are seven reproductions of paintings from medieval and renaissance pontificals.

Some might regret that Father Bligh has not taken as his starting point the participation of the Christian priest in the Priesthood of Christ and the historical link with the Apostles who were sent by Christ even as Christ was sent by his Father. Once it be firmly grasped that the Christian priest, be he of the first or second order, assures the continuation of certain of our Lord's activities, preaching, healing, pardoning, breaking of bread, giving the Lord's commission to new workmen to do these things, so much that is obscure falls into place.

The solution offered to the problem raised by the decree 'For the Armenians' should satisfy most readers. The author's treatment of the circumstances in which a priest may ordain other priests and of the difference between bishop and presbyter is as satisfactory as any which have hitherto been set forward, which means to say that many obscurities remain. Perhaps the simplest explanation would be that the Church has power to designate the minister of a sacrament as she has power, within certain limits, to determine other details of the rite of administration.

Not all will agree with the author's explanation of the laying on of hands by the priests who assist at the ceremony. The question of concelebration is much to the fore these days, but so far no one seems quite sure what they mean by the word. Father Bligh makes the distinction between 'ceremonial' and 'sacramental' concelebration, but his reason for putting the gesture of the assisting priests in the former category will seem unsatisfactory to many.

This book is warmly recommended to priests, would-be priests, parents of priests and to all who wish to understand how is built up the Catholic Church which is the people of God.

RICHARD BLUNDELL, S.J.

THE SUPERIOR'S HANDBOOK. By L. Colin, C.S.S.R. Translated by Fergus Murphy. (Mercier Press; 15s.)

This book is a well-intentioned, and in many ways a competent, piece of work. No superior will be the worse for reading it, though this for many will be a penitential exercise. It is prolix, pitched in the high key of the impassioned preacher, and addressed to readers less intelligent and less virtuous than, thank God, one finds most Superiors to be. But the penance could be salutary for the best, for the principles stressed and the maxims reiterated are all excellent, and the more saintly the reader the more likely he or she is to be touched on the raw here and there. The least worthy are of course the least likely to read such a book, or, if they do, to be improved by it. Once the wrong type of religious has been made a Superior something more miraculous than a good book is required to effect a reformation.

The writer's theme is that besides being an exemplary religious Superior must be as competent at his job as any other highly placed professional person. But the time for formation on such a model is while the future Superior is still a subject. So there seems little call for books addressed to religious except as subjects. The work being done for Superiors at Spode House shows how happy the ordinary Superior is to be back in the ranks again and reminded that the best ruler of others is the one who is still at heart an obedient subject. The only

special warning they need is not to stand in the way of their own subjects' learning, while still subjects, to be better Superiors in their day than even their present Principals are. The paternal and maternal duties of Superiors can be exaggerated. The laws of the Church recognize that the business of the head of a community is rather the common good than the direction of individual consciences. There are Orders where Superiors are called Priors and Prioresses as an emphatic reminder that they are not fathers and mothers in the old monastic sense, but merely the first in a family of brothers and sisters. In such Orders it is often an advantage to have young Superiors and leave the exercise of wisdom, counsel and parental charity to the older members of the community, who as a rule have been Superiors and are now back in the ranks again with a sharpened sense of the needs of subjects.

JOHN-BAPTIST REEVES, O.P.

CATHOLICISM AND THE ECUMENICAL MOVEMENT. By John Todd, with an Introduction by the Abbot of Downside. (Longmans; 6s. 6d.)

We have in this country been extremely badly off for books on the ecumenical movement written from a Catholic viewpoint. So little has been produced that one would guess that many Catholics are ignorant of the fact that such a movement exists. There have been translations of some important works from the continents, and in particular of Fr Congar's key book *Divided Christendom*. Articles have appeared from time to time in reviews, *Eastern Churches Quarterly* has existed for some twenty years, and last year saw the appearance of Fr St John's important *Essays in Christian Unity*, but there are enormous gaps to be filled.

It is for this reason that we welcome so wholeheartedly this book of Mr Todd, in which he sets out to summarize the situation and arouse discussion. He would appear to expect that he will produce some disagreement (and in fact some of his dicta are rather loosely phrased), but nothing in his main thesis cannot be justified from Catholic principles. And the fact that he is provocative is not a bad thing in a book which sets out to be an introduction, since an introduction ought to make people think and not leave them with the feeling that they have learnt all they need to know and can leave it at that.

That such a book should have come from a layman's pen is in itself of importance. In the matter of relations between Catholics and their non-Catholic brothers the layman is as much engaged as the priest and it would be most unfortunate if Catholic interest in matters ecumenical became the hobby of the clergy. As the Instruction of the Holy Office on the Ecumenical Movement, published in 1950, remarks, "This excellent work of "reunion" of all Christians in the one true

h and Church should daily become more integrated as a distinguished portion in the universal pastoral charge and be made an object of concern that the whole Catholic People take to heart and recommend to God in fervent supplications'.

With the advance of the study of missiology the case for a different attitude to the cultures of non-Christians has increasingly gained the day. Mr Todd poses the question of our attitude to the religious traditions of other Christian bodies in our own country, traditions which have now entered the life (cultural as well as religious) of the nation. What could be and what should be their contribution to the life of the Church? These are important questions which Mr Todd discusses clearly and charitably. This is surely a book to be read and thought upon.

On page 50 the date of the 'Faith and Order' and 'Life and Work' conferences should be 1937, not 1938, and on page 101 'Piers Parsch' should read 'Pius Parsch'.

E.M.J.



EXTRACTS

ROSS CURRENTS, the Quarterly from 3111 Broadway, New York, provides the English reader with some of the best or most interesting articles that flow out in such torrents from the Continent. Its only drawback is that its translations are not always truly English. In the translation that follows from a penetrating article on the Rebirth of Catholic Obedience by Friedrich Heer in *Hochland*, the Pope is said to 'obligate' in obedience, and to 'obligate' on the Cross. Such language may justifiably repulse many who could derive much light from the meaning behind the uncouth words. Perhaps, without 'obligating' our readers, we could here encourage them to grit their teeth and go through the following lines.

The Commander of obedience must at all times be aware that, if as the vicar of Christ, as a bishop, he obligates in obedience, he obligates on the Cross. The Catholic Christian . . . has only *one* possibility of asserting himself in the most ultimate matters against his superiors; by means of the cross, by taking it upon himself and by bringing his cause to complete ripeness through his own death. Great witnesses of obedience like a Francis, a Teresa and a Thérèse, an Ignatius, create new areas of freedom, new areas of life in the Church. The stronger, the more vigorous their personality is, the deeper they enter into the winepress of suffering. The growth of the body of Christ on earth is bound to the cross, even to the bearing of the cross

in the Church. . . The rebirth of Catholic obedience, as an unlocking of the deepest potential, of the powers of salvation, will have to start again and again in the first and last dimension of Christian existence in time and space.

The life of obedience is certainly the secret to living in the Church today as always: and that does in fact mean the cross supported behind the Author who carries it before us as he carried it before Simon the Cyrenean. But it is, of course, difficult to find translators for theological German, often so tightly packed with words that the reader gasps for a breath of a lighter air. *Cross Currents* are, on the whole, to be congratulated on the translators they find.

UNTIL England can rise to a lively Catholic illustrated paper readers this side of the Atlantic should support the expert monthly production of *Jubilee* from 377 Fourth Avenue, New York. The double summer number for July-August costs 35c., it is true, but the photography is up to the best standards of weekly glossy journals and the attempts at a modern design are most daring. This issue carries a feature article on Charles de Foucauld, another on the life of an American Army chaplain and a wide-hearted appreciation of the Anglican Fr Huddleston's book on South Africa. Those who are interested in Catholic family community life will find the article on the community at Sheepfold, Connecticut.

Life at Sheepfold is built upon the Benedictine ideals of prayer and work. Its spiritual centre is Regina Laudis, the nearby Benedictine monastery. . . Work, the other pillar of the Benedictine life, takes many forms at Sheepfold. The farm itself—75 acres of pasture and crops, plus a flock of sheep and about 20 Holstein cows—is managed by V. L. . . Now that 'Sheepfold Press' has its own equipment, Miss Ford designs [Christmas] cards, helps Lassauzé print them and supervises the selling assisted by neighbours and friends. The Sheepfold community is growing. Two friends have begun a liturgical arts school nearby; two others, who run a children's drama school in New York City, are living at the farm this summer and plan eventually to move their school there.

It is refreshing to find this effort towards lay community life taking root in the United States.



WE ARE glad to hear from Father Stephen Dessain, the Superior of the Birmingham Oratory, that all the material contained in the first two volumes of the French *Textes Newmaniens*, the second volume of which was reviewed in our August number, will be published in English with a revised text and in one volume by Sheed and Ward this autumn.